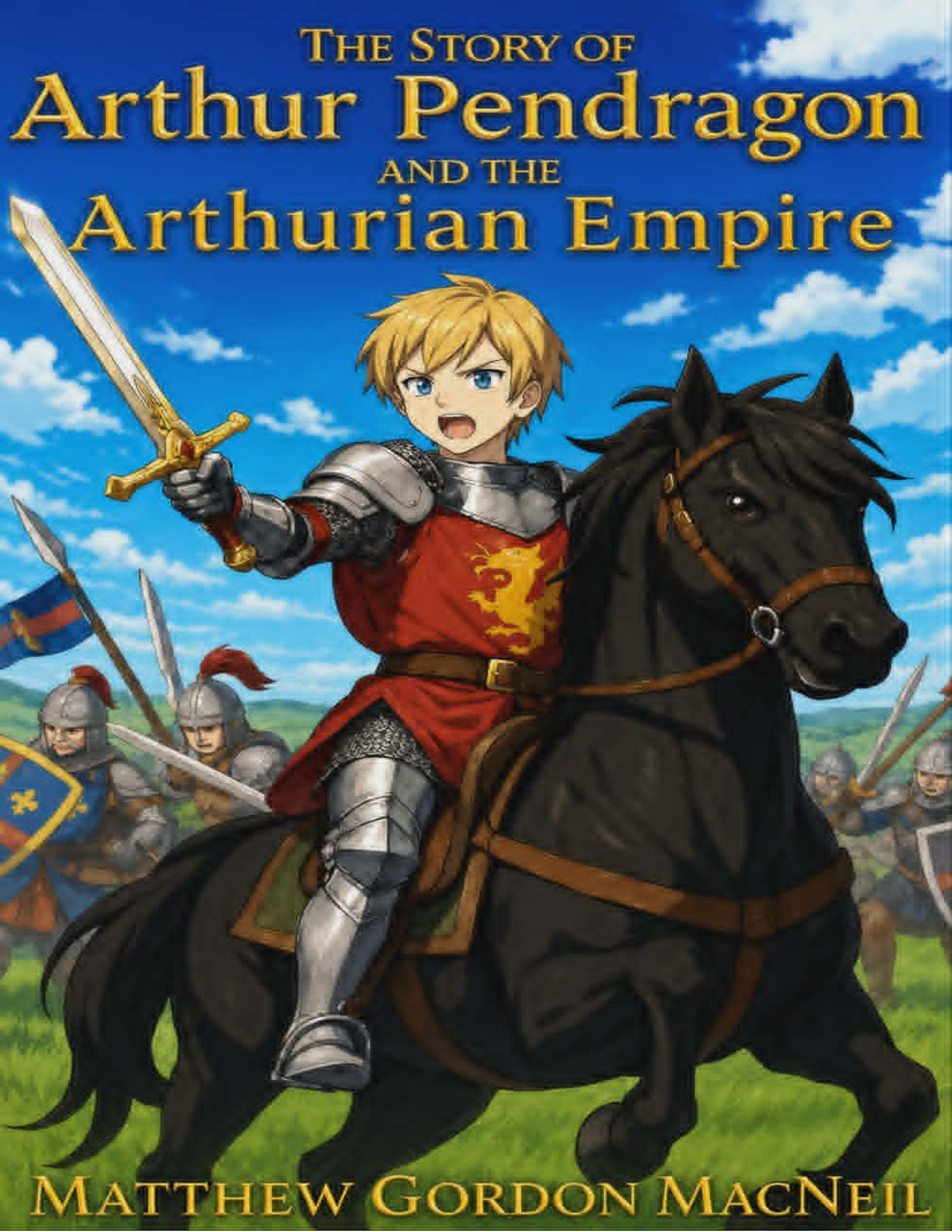
The Story of Arthur Pendragon and the Arthurian Empire



Matthew Gordon MacNeil

The Life of Arthur Pendragon: Founder of the First British Empire

By Matthew Gordon MacNeil

Notes:

This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Theresa MacNeil, a descendant of the Pendragons and someone who I was lucky to have spent twenty six years with.

I love you nan and I will never forget you.

Chapter 1: Before Arthur: Vortigern's usurpation

In 473 AD Britain was ruled by Constantine Pendragon, a descendant of Magnus Maximus, the Emperor of Rome and the first to take the surname Pendragon.

Constantine had been invested in the Kingship several years before when Guethelin, the Archbishop of London, called on the Kingdom of Armorica, a land in the Roman province of Gaul, to give them a King as their previous line of rulers had died out.

Constantine's family were related to the British royal line as his ancestors had been Kings of Britain before moving to Gaul shortly after Magnus Maximus took the crown of Rome. Like the former British King Constantine traced his descent back thousands of years to Brutus of Troy, the first King of Britain in the 11th century BC.

For centuries thereafter Constantine's family had ruled Britain and he counted among his ancestors Alexander the Great, who's granddaughter married his ancestor Gorbonian. Caradoc, the British King who married the Roman Emperor Claudius's daughter Julia Venus, and through this line

Constantine claimed descent from Rome's first King Romulus. He also proudly claimed descent from Joseph of Arimathea, the younger brother of Mary the mother of Jesus, and thus a descendant of King David and Aaron the High Priest. Constantine also descended from both the Constantinian and Theodosian Dynasties and the Roman Emperors Gordian I, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Augustus, and Maximinus Thrax. These lines of descent helped him claim the throne but, ironically, despite how eager he was to take the crown when the British delegation arrived in 463, he wasn't their choice. His brother Aldrian was.

Aldrian was a wise and respected King and, according to the laws of inheritance, the next in line for the British throne. Constantine would have known this yet he still harboured hopes he would be chosen.

Upon arriving in Armorica Guethelin was warmly received into the royal court by Aldrian and treated to all the pleasures and luxuries his host could offer. Over a meal a day later Aldrian asked the Archbishop why he had come, to which Guethelin informed him of the extinction of the main British royal line, something he no doubt already knew, and told him that the nobility of Britain wanted him to be their new King.

Aldrian, much humbled by the offer, respectfully turned it down, stating that once he would have loved to have taken

the crown but now, given Britain's circumstances (it was suffering attacks from Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, and Irish marauders) and infighting amongst the different noblemen and women, he did not want it.

A reasonable choice to be sure, Armorica was enjoying peace and what decent King would want to subject his people to possible civil war and revenge raids? Aldrian, however, didn't leave the Archbishop 'out in the cold' so to speak, he offered Constantine in his place along with two thousand men.

The Archbishop thanked him and quickly accepted, becoming even more grateful when it was revealed Constantine was a capable soldier who could lead the British against their attackers.

A day later they set sail for Britain, landing at the port of Totness in the Kingdom of Cornwall, the very same place Constantine's ancestor Brutus had landed thousands of years earlier. From Totness Constantine quickly rallied the nobility and soldiers of the Kingdom and led them against the marauding Saxons and others, defeating them in several bloody battles, driving them from the country.

Once peace was restored, at least for the time being, Constantine and his new subjects made their way to the settlement of Calleva, a Roman town, where he was formally crowned by Archbishop Guethelin as King of Britain. He also

soon married Ivoine, a young woman brought up in Guethelin's household. Not much is known of her besides the fact that she came from a noble family of Roman stock. Together the pair would have four sons:

Constans, born in 465.

Aurelius, born in 468.

Uther, born in 469.

David, born in 470.

King Constantine held court in Camulod which is now the modern city of Winchester, and here he ruled the British Isles successfully for ten years. During this time he gave his three eldest sons into the care of Guethelin to be educated with the hopes that Aurelius and Uther would become priests, allowing Constans to claim the throne uncontested when he was gone.

In the court at this time was a certain nobleman named Vortigern, who was a Prince of Wales. Vortigern descended from a junior branch of the British royal line and also descended from Magnus Maxinus through his daughter Sevira who married his ancestor, also named Vortigern.

The younger Vortigern craved power. It wasn't enough he ruled a portion of Wales, Powys, he wanted more and believed that his branch of the family had been snubbed in favor of Constantine's. He viewed the King as a foreigner with

no rightful claim to the throne and while feigning loyalty outwardly, secretly plotted against him.

In the tenth year of Constantine's reign Vortigern finally decided to make his move on him. Hiring a Pictish assassin, the Welsh Prince ordered him to get the King alone and drive a dagger through him.

The Pict, who's name, unfortunately, has been lost, succeeded in luring the King into a false sense of security while out in the countryside. Bringing him under a canopy of trees out of sight of prying eyes the assassin pulled his dagger and stabbed Constantine to death.

it didn't take long for the news to spread across Britain that the King was dead and the royal court errupted into chaos. Vortigern, pretending to still be a loyal servant of the royal family, went to Guethelin's house and met with Constans, who was only eight years old, and told him he was to be King.

Of course being at such a young age the boy couldn't possibly rule yet and Vortigern, taking firm advantage of the situation, made himself Constans' regent, becoming the effective ruler of Britain.

Constans Pendragon was crowned in London soon after his father's assassination, invested with the regal robes, scepter, and crown. Vortigern, against custom, placing the crown on

the boy's head himself, earning the ire of the Church.

After the coronation ceremony Constans was shipped off back to his educators while Vortigern settled in to his role of regnant. This lasted several months, all the while Vortigern ruled harshly and with an iron fist, though some did not allow him to treat them poorly as he was not the King.

These nobles who resisted made him realize that while he may in theory hold the power of the government, he wouldn't hold full control unless he became King in every sense of the word, and to that end he began planning a way to get rid of Constans and his younger brothers.

Before he did carry out these plans however, he made sure to assassinate other nobles within the court that would, he knew, oppose his rule, taking a dozen lives before moving on Constans.

To kill the boy Vortigern again hired a Pictish assassin, not having the stomach to do it himself. This Pict, possibly the same man who killed Constantine (though its unknown), broke into the monastery where Constan was being educated, kicked down the boy's bedchamber door, and slaughtered him in his own bed.

Seizing his chance Vortigern proclaimed himself King and quickly took control of all fortified cities and towns in Britain,

crushing any possible revolts before they got started. He sent assassins to kill Constans' younger brothers but their mother and loyal servants were able to spirit them away to Armorica where they would be safe under the care of King Budic I, son of Aldrian, who made sure to give his three cousins a good education and a good home.

The first act he did as King was to execute the Pictish assassin, fearing he would in turn attack him for a high price. This execution prompted the Picts and Scots to form an alliance and invade from Scotland, plunging Vortigern into war almost immediately after taking the crown.

The usurper was no General and found this out the hard way when the combined Pictish-Scottish forces ravaged southern Britain and nearly brought his reign to an end before it even had a chance to truly begin.

Luckily for Vortigern (at least at first) around the time this invasion came a fleet of ships landed in Kent. These ships were full of Saxon warriors led by two brothers, Hengist and Horsa.

These two brothers were known warriors in continental Europe, Hengist having fought in the Battle of Finnsburg in 450 as a retainer for the Danish Prince Hnaef where he avenged his Lord's murder. After Hnaef's death Hengist left Denmark and returned to Germania where he settled down as

a Chieftain before ultimately leading warriors to Britain with his younger brother.

As mentioned previously Saxon raids had been occurring in Britain before Constantine's time and can be traced back to the middle 300s. These raids were much like the later Viking raids of the 9th century, and its likely Hengist and Horsa, as younger men, had fought in some of these raids.

Now however, they did not come to raid but to settle.

Vortigern arranged a meeting with the two brothers in London and when asked why they were in Britain Hengist said they came to offer their services to the King in exchange for land. That Woden, the Saxon name for the God Odin, led them to Vortigern so that he may make use of them.

And make use of them he did. It was well known among the Britons how fierce and deadly Germanic warriors, and Saxons in particular, were. Like their later Viking cousins the Saxons had one class of warrior that struck fear into the hearts of any who encountered them.

The Berserkers.

These men were both warriors and Shamans, using drums and music to enter into trance like states to commune with the Germanic Gods, and take on the powers of the Wolf and Bear.

Berserkers could be broken down into two groups. The Bear

Berserkers and the Wolf Berserkers, both are exactly what they sound like. The Bear Berserker wore a bear's headdress into battle while a Wolf Berserker wore a Wolf headdress, each class venerated and respected these animals and hoped to be able to emulate them on the battlefield.

The patron Gods of the Berserker Class were Woden and Tiw, the Saxon God of War better known by his Norse name Tyr.

Shortly after the Saxons arrived and joined the usurper's service, the Scots and Picts attacked again, tearing Northern Britain apart. Vortigern led his men against them but he need not have bothered. The Saxon brothers and their men eagerly leapt into battle, butchering the Scots and Picts so thoroughly thet they fled back across the border into Scotland.

This victory ended the rebellion in the North and secured Hengist and Horsa's place at Vortigern's side. So impressed and enthralled by the Saxons' battle prowess he gave them Kent as their own possession, making Hengist Duke of the Saxons.

Hengist worked this influence and used it to bring over more of his tribesmen, including his daughter Rowena, from Germania. Rowena, a beauty according to the histories, soon caught the eye of Vortigern, who lusted after her.

Seeing this Hengist knew he could wrap the infatuated King

around his finger and so told his daughter to play along and seduce Vortigern. Rowena, a clever and intelligent woman, wasted little time in doing so.

This didn't sit well with Vortigern's lawful wife Eadmunda (who, given the name, was most likely also of Germanic origin, though a Christian) or their children Vortimer, Pascentius, and Flavia, all of whom objected to their father's advances towards a Pagan woman. But, as horny people have done throughout the ages, Vortigern ignored his family and pursued his desires.

Things became so bad that Pascentius and Flavia left London going places unknown. Vortimer and his mother stayed and bore witness to Vortigern casting aside all Christian customs and marrying Rowena, not even demanding she convert to Christianity first. Hengist, as the King's new father in law, was raised in rank to become Kent's King, Horsa became his General.

The marriage to a Pagan and allowing Pagans, especially Saxons who had harassed and killed them for a hundred years by this point enraged several British nobles, including Eldol, a leader of the city of Kaerglou, and they threatened rebellion. To settle matters Hengist advised the King to arrange a meeting between him, the Saxons, and the disgruntled British nobles, so they could come to terms beneficial to all of them.

Vortigern did so.

Calling a meeting on what is now Salisbury Plains at the monastery of Ambrius, Vortigern and Hengist, along with hundreds of Saxon warriors, met Eldol and those he led. They sat around a table ready to discuss terms. The date was May 1st, 488.

Little did the British know that Hengist, before the talks, had given orders to his men that, upon his order, they were to draw their Seax long knives, and kill every noble there except the King and his son.

Hengist sat beside Vortigern, Horsa sat beside Vortimer and, at the opportune time, Hengist shouted for his men to draw their long knives and he and his brother gripped the man beside them and held their blades to their throats.

The butchery unleashed that day is hard to fathom. Told each party would be unarmed the British nobles brought no weapons and were unable to defend themselves from the Saxons.

By some miracle Eldol managed to escape after smashing his attacker's head into the table but the rest were not so lucky. In all over four hundred and sixty British noblemen were murdered that day.

The massacre at Ambrius monastery marked the turning point

in Vortigern's reign. No longer would the nobles and common people sit by and let him continue to throw Britain into chaos. Soon after escaping the massacre Eldol raised an army, declaring his loyalty to the rightful heir Aurelius Pendragon, and swiftly moved against Vortigern and his Saxon masters.

Hengist and Horsa took control of the government, sending Vortigern to his estates in Wales, having no further use for him. Vortimer fled from London, joining his mother and siblings.

While civil war began in Britain, in Armorica Aurelius and Uther, now twenty and nineteen respectively, gathered a fleet of ships with the aid of Budic and sailed for Scotland.

Landing on the Scottish coast the two sons of Constantine immediately received a warm welcome and hundreds flocked to their Red Dragon Banner, including Pascentius, Vortimer, and Flavia.

Flavia and Aurelius, as soon as they met, became instantly attracted to one another. It didn't matter to Aurelius she was the daughter of his father's murderer, he didn't blame her for that and the two soon became lovers.

Eldol, learning of the landing of the Pendragons, raced to Scotland with his men, linking up with them. Now, with thousands swelling their ranks, Aurelius was crowned King of

Britain in Scotland and he and Uther marched into Loegria, the British name for what is now England, to meet the Saxons.

Hengist and Horsa met them in a field known as Maisbeli in what is now Yorkshire.

The two sides clashed, Aurelius and Uther leading from the front alongside Eldol, Vortimer, and Pascentius. Hours past, the field's green pasture becoming soaked in dark red blood. Vortimer fell in the middle of the battle, earning his redemption.

Eldol, finding Hengist, went through the crowds of battling warriors and locked swords with him, the two men struggling back and forth to gain the upper hand. Hengist, victorious in so many other battles, could not beat the British warrior and fell, Eldol's sword chopping into his neck, slicing off his head.

Horsa also died in the Battle of Maisbeli but the details are unknown. Octa, Hengist's son and heir, and his nephew Eosa, retreated and would later make peace with Aurelius, being allowed to remain in Northern Britain if they swore loyalty to the crown, which they both did.

Aurelius had both Hengist and Horsa buried according to Germanic religious rites and then marched on to Wales where he and Uther intended to kill Vortigern.

Vortigern, hiding out in a castle he built years before, had

nowhere run. His Saxon allies were dead, his British subjects abandoned him, and even his children hated him. His actions during his final days as Britain's official King are known only to him as no one attended him before Aurelius and Uther came.

Surrounding Vortigern's castle Aurelius ordered it attacked. Hundreds of British soldiers rushed in, dragging him out before the Pendragon brothers.

Dismounting Aurelius approached Vortigern, the man a shadow of his former self. He looked him over, no doubt remembering all the years of pain and sorrow this man caused him and his younger brothers.

Aurelius looked at Flavia and back at her father. Uther urged him to finish it, but he refused. Aurelius ordered Vortigern to be spared but exiled, and the usurper was removed from his sight. What happened to Vortigern after this is unknown, where he went or when he died went unrecorded.

Upon defeating Vortigern Aurelius married Flavia and by the next year, 489, they welcomed a son, Merlin. A year later they would welcome their second and final child, a daughter named Ganieda.

Chapter 2: The Reign of Aurelius Pendragon

To mark the official beginning of his reign as King Aurelius called all the leading men of Britain to York where he discussed how they would rebuild the country, the Saxons and Scots and Picts having left many parts of it in ruins. Among his first decrees was the reconstruction of Churches across Loegria, the Saxons having reduced them to ruins after plundering them.

Spending fifteen days at this task Aurelius then left York for London where he revived British law and recalled all those Britons who had fled across the channel to Gaul in wake of the Saxon conquest. A fair and just man, Aurelius made sure heirs to estates were given their inheritance. He restored the courts to their functions and drafted new laws to better govern the people.

As things began to slowly settle back into normalcy Aurelius made his way to the monastery of Ambrius on the advice of Bishop Eldad, Eldol's younger brother, where the King stood over the graves of those whom Hengist and his warriors murdered.

Aurelius, a compassionate and sensitive man, openly shed tears as he thought of the horror and bloodshed the noblemen must have experienced before their deaths, deciding he wanted to build a lasting monument to their

memories.

The problem was he didn't know what to create or, for that matter, what materials to use.

The Archbishop of Caerlon, Tremouneus, then advised the King to seek out a Magical Sage named Blaise who would be able to assist him in this goal.

Blaise, a Druid, lived in the North and carried a reputation of being a fine scholar and wizard. If anyone could help Aurelius design and create a lasting monument to the British dead he could.

The young King called Blaise to him and asked him what kind of monument he could build to honour the noblemen. Blaise scanned the plains, lost in thought a moment, and then looked back at Aurelius.

In Ireland, he said, there were a collection of stones called the Giant's Dance, an ancient structure brought to the country by giants long ago when they left their home in Africa.

Aurelius burst out laughing at this. Why, he asked, would he waste time and men going to Ireland instead of using British stones?

Because, Blaise said calmly, the Giant's Dance weren't just simple stones, but held Magical healing properties. The giants of old used to bath in between them and heal wounds.

On hearing this Aurelius stopped laughing and considered the Druid's proposal seriously. He decided he wanted those stones and tasked Uther, with fifteen hundred men behind him, to sail to Ireland and take them by force if need be.

Naturally both Pendragon brothers knew this would lead to battle, there was no way it couldn't, but conquest wasn't their aim here and Aurelius made it clear. A week later Uther set off.

The British landed on the Irish coast and made their way inland. Word of this force quickly reached the royal capital at Tara and Ireland's King, Lugaid MacLoegairi, raised his own force to meet them.

In the modern county of Westmeath the Britons and Irish met in battle. To Lugaid it must surely have seemed like an invasion force and he treated it as such, battling fiercely with his men to push back the British, but after several hours of harsh fighting, the Irish ranks gave way and Lugaid retreated.

Uther pressed on, Blaise at his side, leading the way to the Hill of Uisneach, a sacred place to the Irish where, according to several stories, rested the burial ground of the Fairies known to the Irish as the Tuatha De Danaan. And it was where the humans and Fairies, thousands of years earlier, had made peace with one another after a bitter war during the Milesian invasion of Ireland (the Milesians being the ancestors of the

Irish).

Its unlikely Uther knew or would have cared even if he had known of this place's importance to Irish religion and belief, all he wanted was some of the stones.

But, as his men tried removing them, they found they couldn't make them budge.

Blaise, standing off to the side, let out a bit of laughter and then used his Magic to lift the stones up and onto the wooden carriers the British brought with them.

Having what they came for the British Prince and his men marched out of the country, Lugaid powerless to stop them.

Returning to Salisbury Plains Blaise set up the stones around the graves of the noblemen and Aurelius gave it his blessing.

The monument became known as Stonehenge.

Soon after the construction of Stonehenge Aurelius called his youngest brother David, who up to this time had been studying in Rome, back to Britain, and the three Pendragon brothers were finally back together again. David continued his education under Dubric, a young Welsh priest who would later become Archbishop of Caerlon.

For another year Britain knew peace and prosperity under

Aurelius's reign, but it did not last.

In 491 AD, for reasons not made clear, Pascentius grew tired of his brother in law and desired the Kingship for himself, believing, ironically enough, that it was his right as the heir of Vortigern.

To this end he slipped away one night and made his way by ship to Germania to the tribal lands of the Saxons. It speaks volumes of how power hunrgy he must have been to turn to the very people he left his father because of two years previously.

By promising riches and land Pascentius was able to convince an army's worth of warriors to join him and made his way back to Britain.

Aurelius and Uther marshalled their own forces and met the usurper's son in battle, destroying much of his men and driving the rest, along with Pascentius, out of the Kingdom.

Pascentius found his way to Ireland and went to Tara where Lugaid MacLoegairi received him. The two men shared their mutual stories of defeat at the hands of the Pendragons and soon forged an alliance. Lugaid, burning with a desire to avenge himself on Uther in particular, added many Irish warriors to Pascentius's army and they sailed again to Britain, landing in Wales and besieging the city of Menevia straight

away.

Aurelius, having fallen ill, couldn't lead the army personally, so that task fell to Uther, and the Prince rushed to the city's defense, clashing with the combined Saxon-Irish army in what would prove to be one of his greatest victories.

He smashed the Saxons and Irish to pieces, leaving few survivors. Among the dead was Pascentius.

While Pascentius may have died in the Battle of Menevia, his effect on Britain wasn't done yet.

Prior to the engagement with Uther's army Pascentius hired Eopa, a Saxon who came to Britain with Hengist and Horsa and who had, up until that time, spent much time learning the British language and culture while living in the North under Octa's rule.

Eopa's task was to infiltrate the palace in Camulod under the guise of a monk and get close to Aurelius. Once he did so, he was to create a 'potion' and give it to the King. The 'potion' of course was actually poison.

While Uther fought at Menevia Eopa slipped into the royal capital and gained access to Aurelius, his acting skills top notch.

Doing as Pascentius said he mixed up a potion and gave it to the ill King, saying it would cure him. Aurelius took it, trusting

a man he believed to be of the Church and quickly fell into a deep sleep from which he never awoke.

Eopa managed to escape from the palace before being caught and, upon learning the fate of Pascentius, faded into the mists of time. We don't know where he went and he was never punished.

Lugaid retreated again after the crushing defeat by Uther and returned to Ireland, where he was never the same. He would rule for several more years but he was a husk of his former self.

As Merlin, still a toddler, was too young to inherit the throne, the nobility and clergy gave the crown to Uther. Among his first acts as King was to place Merlin and Ganieda into the care of Blaise who, along with Flavia, would raise them.

Aurelius Pendragon was buried at Stonehenge.

Chapter 3: The Birth of Arthur

As news spread across Britain that Aurelius Pendragon was dead some grew restless and sought to capitalize on this change.

Among these were Octa and Eosa. They believed now that the old King was dead they were no longer bound by the peace agreement and so began raiding British villages and cities, linking up with the remnants of Pascentius's Saxon army.

Messengers were sent across to Germania by Octa and again another Saxon invasion was begun, a fleet of ships arriving within weeks in Scotland.

Meeting them there Octa and Eosa led their warriors in a total war campaign, sparing neither village, city, or fortress. They rampaged across Scotland and into Loegria before Uther and the royal army was able to meet them in battle.

The two forces met outside the city of York, Octa's warriors overcoming the British and forcing them to retreat and the Saxons gave chase, harassing them up into a mountain called Damen.

Uther commanded his men to take position up on Damen and hold the line and they succeeded in driving the Saxons back down before a slaughter took place. However, now they were trapped.

The King ordered camp to be set up amidst the rocky terrain and during the night he called together his Generals.

One, a young Knight named Gorlois, was Uther's best friend and a Cornish Lord, Master of Tintagel Castle along Cornwall's

Coast and a descendant of the Roman Emperor Maxentius and Kamber, the first King of Wales and a son of Brutus of Troy. Uther valued Gorlois's opinion more than anyone else's and so asked him first what they should do.

Gorlois looked at the faces of those assembled around the morning fire, every one looked miserable and tired. He cleared his throat and laid out his plan.

"The Pagans are numerous and eager to fight, and we are much inferior in numbers to them. If we stay until daybreak, we will lose the advantage. Therefore I say we use the cover of night and go down in close body and surprise them in an attack."

Uther and the others approved of Gorlois's plan and the King ordered everyone to grab their weapons and follow him down the mountain.

Close together the British made their way down towards the Saxon camp, going slowly as not to make any sudden noises. Uther was up front with Gorlois, the two always together in battle.

They nearly reached the camp when a Saxon sentry spotted them and blew on his horn, alerting Octa and the others to the sneak attack.

Some of the Saxons rose to battle but most, shocked at the

sudden loud whine of the horn, panicked thinking Gods know what and retreated. For their part Uther and his men kept marching towards those who stood to face them, tight together. Easily overcoming the defenders, they ran into the camp proper and killed over a thousand Saxons. Octa and Eosa were taken prisoner and the survivors fled. Some would return to their farms where they lived quietly, the King letting them be.

Following this victory at the foot of Mount Damen Uther retired to the city of Dunbarton in the Scottish lowlands where he held court for awhile, helping the Scottish King repair the destruction the Saxon horde caused and helping him draft new laws for the Scottish Kingdom.

Once Scotland was set back on course the King returned to Camulod, now called Camelot, where he ordered Octa and Eosa to be held in the dungeons beneath the royal palace. Soon after, Uther celebrated his first Easter as King, nobles from all across the British Isles came to celebrate with him.

Many brought their wives and children, including Gorlois who brought his wife Igraine, daughter of Amleth, a Danish Prince, son of King Aurvendill of Denmark and Queen Gerutha, who came to Britain during the reign of Constantine as a raider but who later settled down among the British who knew him as Amlawdd Wledig.

Amleth was descended from the God Hodr, the son of Odin and Frigga and this made him, coupled with his royal descent, a well respected figure in the small Scandinavian Pagan community in Britain. Igraine's mother, Gwenwyn, was the granddaughter of Cunedda, a renowned Scottish Prince and General. Together with them Gorlois and Igraine also brought their little boy, Cador.

Igraine was said to be the most striking woman in the Kingdom of Britain at that time. Young and slender she caught the eye of most men, including Uther.

Instantly the King fell in love, or more accurately, became filled with lust for Igraine. He could hardly take his eyes off her, and made sure her plate and wine cup were always filled.

Gorlois, not failing to notice his friend acting this way, became angry but instead of confronting Uther and making a scene in front of his guests, the Lord of Tintagel retired from the dining table with his wife and son, leaving Camelot that night and riding back to Cornwall where he would remain for years, refusing to either see or speak with Uther.

Britain knew peace under Uther. The Saxons were subdued and his people prospered, yet the King himself did not enjoy the same. His lust for Igraine grew with each passing year, burning hot inside until he could barely contain it. In 499, he finally had enough and contacted Blaise, asking for help.

Blaise, at this time living in Northern Loegria close to the Scottish border with Merlin, Ganieda, and Flavia, hastened to the King's side and inquired what he needed. When Uther informed him he desired Gorlois's wife, Blaise didn't hesitate.

He took Uther to a Lake in what is now the English county of Somerset. The Lake, Blaise told the King, was a portal to the Fairy realm of Avalon.

Avalon was ruled by Vivian, Queen of the Fairies. Blaise explained Vivian would grant him a wish but in return he must make a sacrifice. Fairies, Blaise warned the King, did not play by mortal law and while the sacrifice may seem absurd or crazy to human ears, it would make sense to the Fairy Queen. Uther nodded and asked the Druid to summon Vivian.

Blaise chanted an ancient spell and it echoed across the Lake. Bright light flashed, blinding both men. When they opened their eyes a beautiful woman stood on the face of the water.

The first thing Uther noticed was that her feet were hovering above the water, not touching it or in it, but gently hanging over it.

She asked them why she had been summoned and before Blaise could tell her Uther explained everything, asking that his 'love' for Igraine be allowed to be fulfilled.

Vivian listend to the human King's problem sympathetically.

Once he finished she came closer.

Hovering by the shore of the Lake the Queen of Avalon told Uther she could grant him his wish, he could sleep with Igraine and marry her, but it would cost him a price. Both in the now and in the future.

She never specified what the cost would be, and Uther was too happy to care. He accepted her offer and Vivian gave him instructions.

Make war on Gorlois, she said, ride right up to his castle and besiege him. Once his forces come out, withdraw and wait for me to come to you.

Then, as quickly as she appeared, Vivian was gone.

And Uther was set upon civil war.

What Britain's nobles thought of the decree of war against Gorlois is anyone's guess, for no first hand accounts of their opinions exist. However they reacted none withheld support from the King, within a month of meeting Vivian Uther was in Cornwall, razing towns and cities as he went, punishing the entire Cornish Kingdom for Gorlois's defiance.

The Lord of Tintagel, all alone against Uther, sent a messenger to Ireland to ask Lugaid for help, but no help was given.

Gorlois, believing it was best to split up the family, placed Igraine and Cador in Tintagel while he and his chief advisors took up residence in another castle under his rule, Dimilioc.

Uther split his army in two. One half, under the command of Ulfin Ricaradoch, a half British, half Saxon Knight, was sent against Castle Dimilioc while the King led the other against Tintagel. He believed Gorlois was in Tintagel and he wished to make one last attempt at peace with his old friend. Ulfin's mission was to close off support for the Cornish Lord and allow Uther to pressure him into a peace.

But, as we have seen, Gorlois wasn't in Tintagel. Uther attacked, besieging it and, as Vivian commanded, he withdrew once a force came out to meet him, engaging them in a drawn out battle until finally the two sides, tired out, made camp for the night.

The Fairy Queen appeared to the King in his camp that night, giving him the wish he so desperately thought.

She cast a spell on him to give him the appearance of Gorlois. He resembled Tintagel's Lord in every aspect, from eye colour to face to voice.

Vivian reminded Uther of his sacrifices and transported him to the gates of Tintagel, where she left him to make his way inside.

Acting as Gorlois he ordered the gates to be opened and marched in, saluting his men as he passed. Making his way into the castle Uther found Igraine's room and went in.

The Lady of Tintagel, unawares of the true identity of the man in front of her, embraced her husband happily and the two soon fell into bed.

While Uther slept with his wife, the true Gorlois defended Dimilioc valiantly against Ulfin's men. He led an attack out of the castle gate, hoping to push back Ulfin's warriors.

Instead all Gorlois found was death. He was killed as his men reached Ulfin's. Once their Lord was dead the Cornishmen were easily routed, Dimilioc fell and so did the surrounding countryside. Being victorious Ulfin rode for Tintagel where he and his warriors rejoined the main army.

Leaving the sleeping Igraine Uther slipped from the castle and back down into his camp, throwing off the disguise Vivian gave him. Ulfin, waiting for him in his tent, told the King of Gorlois' death.

Uther was heartbroken and inconsolable. The Fairy Queen's words came back to him then and it made him fall to his knees. The sacrifice she spoke of was the sacrifice of his best friend to have his lust.

After the victory in Cornwall Uther was never quite the same,

but he soon found joy in courting Igraine.

Shortly after Gorlois's death the King married her, making her his Queen.

The next year, 500, they welcomed their first child, a baby boy they named Arthur.

After Arthur they would go on to have a further seven children who are as follows:

Anna, born in 501.

Elaine, born in 503.

Morgana, born in 504.

Madoc, born in 506.

Kay, born in 508.

Morgause, born in 509.

Gormant, born in 511.

Uther adopted Cador as his son and raised him as his own. He would, like Merlin, become a close friend and advisor to Arthur. It was also around the time of Arthur's birth that Blaise began writing down the deeds of the Pendragon Kings. Merlin, in his elderly years, would finish this book his master started and write a few of his own, and these became primary sources for Nennius and other future British historians.

Chapter 4: The Death Song of Uther Pendragon

Britain enjoyed peace for fifteen years, Irish raiders occasionally attacked but were quickly repulsed.

Uther ruled the Kingdom justly and brought the standards of living for his people up. Trade prospered with Gaul and other Roman territories, and immigrants of various origins came to Britain, including Irishmen and Gauls.

Merlin, now a young Druid, was chosen by his uncle to be the tutor to the young Prince Arthur. In times past Druids had trained British royalty and many members of the royal family had become Druids themselves, so its likely Uther, while not wanting Arthur to become a Druid, wanted his heir to have the knowledge about Magic and the old Gods to use to help him rule when his time came.

It was because of this training by Merlin that Arthur, all his life, walked between two worlds. One was the world of pre Christian Britain, a world full of spirits, Gods, Fairies, and Magic. The other world was the Church and what it taught, Jesus's resurrection, his miracles, Angels and the Devil. Arthur believed in it all equally and it was due to this upbringing that

he was able to be tolerant of other religious beliefs and protected people's freedom to worship whatever Gods or God they chose.

Another event in Arthur's childhood that would have a great effect on his reign was his father's founding of the Order of the Round Table.

The Round Table wasn't Uther's idea, rather he was reinstituting an ancient British custom that his ancestors in bygone times began. The Round Table reflected the ancient British belief in equality and balance in all things. That no man, no matter how great, stood above another.

Its unknown why Uther decided to bring the Round Table back though its likely, as a man who valued traditions of the past, he saw benefits in recreating the Order. The Knights who joined became the Generals of Uther's army and the Round Table Order became Britain's elite fighting force.

Arthur would have grown up, along with his half brother Cador and his younger brothers Madoc, Kay and Gormant, learning how to fight from these same warriors who helped lead their father's armies. One of the men who helped train them was Sir Ulfin.

Ulfin was a loyal and devoted servant of both the King and the entire royal family, doting on Arthur and his siblings. Through

Ulfin Arthur became a skilled swordsman. Each day around six every morning the Prince was awoken, brought to the training ground behind the palace and given a sword. Along with his brothers Arthur was drilled and hardened into a warrior from the age of eight up until he was fifteen.

That year, 515, everything changed.

Octa and Eosa, long held underneath Camelot's streets in the dungeons, escaped captivity after over a decade of being imprisoned with the help of a few guards. What the Saxons offered them, if anything, isn't known, but they fled the Kingdom and returned to Germania. Here they stoked the fires of hatred against Uther and the British, playing up their suffering. Men flocked to their Raven and Wolf Banners, the symbols of Woden, and soon a vast army made up of Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, sailed for Britain, landing in the North.

The Scottish King, Gabran, did his best to confront the army but was overwhelmed and soon retreated back to his palace of Dunadd.

Uther, ill at this time with an unknown illness, asked Lot, a young Scottish Knight and grandson of the King of Norway (his mother being a Norse Princess) and Ulfin to lead his armies against Octa and Eosa.

Lot, while young, did have experience battling Irish raiders

and was known to be a good tactician and Uther, as it turned out, made the right choice as the young Scotsman and Ulfin, while suffering some setbacks, were able to inflict several severe defeats on the Germanic army. But still they kept coming.

Eventually Uther, growing tired of hearing this 'back and forth' decided to ignore his sickness, don his armour, and lead his troops into battle once more. But the King, older in years now, could not muster the strength to ride so, per his wishes, his men carried him in a litter into Scotland.

The British, upon seeing their King risking his own health for his Kingdom, were inspired and filled with courage. They found the Germanic warriors in Dunbarton and when Octa and Eosa heard of Uther's condition, neither man wanted to fight for they believed it would be shameful for those who were healthy to defeat one half dead.

In their pride the two cousins made a stupid mistake. They left the gates wide open in a sign of mockery, and they regretted it immediately.

Uther ordered a charge and all his men rushed to attack the city, swarming it.

There was much slaughter in the streets of the Scottish city as Briton and German fought, each side not giving an inch.

In this chaos Octa and Eosa were slain and upon their deaths the Germans gave up and fled. The new leaders of the army, sons of Octa named Ossa and Oisc, held no illusions that they could win and fled back to Germania to lick their wounds.

Filled with joy for his victory, the King returned to Camelot where he held court and gave gifts to his friends. To Lot he promised Anna's hand in marriage when she came of age. To Ulfin, he granted the Stewardship of the Kingdom, and he held a great feast in honour of his warriors.

A few days after his return Uther Pendragon passed away, his body worn down from the exertion he forced on it while facing Octa and Eosa. He sacrificed his life for the Kingdom.

Dubric, Archbishop of Caerlon, along with Arthur, his mother, his last surviving uncle, David, and siblings and all of the nobility, carried Uther's body to Stonehenge where he was laid to rest beside Aurelius and all those British nobles who Hengist killed all those years before.

One wonders what Arthur must have thought as they lowered his father's body into the ground. He was only fifteen and now the British crown was his, it must've felt surreal, like the world suddenly collapsed on his shoulders.

He didn't get to mourn, however, as even while burying Uther rebellion was beginning to form among noblemen who

refused to acknowledge 'a beardless boy' as their King.

Foremost among them was Lot and Gabran.

Chapter 5: Excalibur

A few days after Uther's funeral Dubric called the British nobility to Silschester where the coronation of Arthur would be held. Most attended but others, led by Lot and Gabran, refused to go. Others who refused to attend were Caradoc Strongarm, the King of Wales, Pellam, Lord of Listeneise, situated in the Lake District in northwest England today, Urian, Lord of Cumbria and younger brother of Gabran, and together these men created an alliance against Arthur.

Merlin, learning of this, went to Lot's home in Scotland and met with the men in secret, demanding to know why they resisted their rightful King.

Lot, not very much older than Arthur himself, told the Druid flat out that they would not follow 'a beardless boy.' Arthur's age, they insisted, was enough reason to oppose his succession.

Merlin advised them not to be so foolish. That he was the

rightful heir and in the end he would prevail. Lot laughed and scorned his predications, mocking him and asking his fellows why they should listen to 'a mere dream reader.'

Merlin, tired of his efforts, left Scotland and returned to Silschester where he watched Archbishop Dubric crown Arthur King of Britain.

Soon after Arthur's coronation he went to Caerlon where, on Merlin's advice, he held a feast to award his father's soldiers and ask them to swear loyalty to him. His siblings and mother were also there and like during Uther's time the nobles were expected to swear loyalty to them as well.

While the festivities were underway Lot and his allies invaded Loegria, defeating what little resistance they faced, and headed into Wales and besieged Caerlon. It was here Arthur faced his first battle.

The siege lasted fifteen days, the new King leading his men in the defense of the city valiantly and beating back every attempt Lot made to take it.

Eventually, worn down by the bloodshed, Lot asked for Arthur to come speak to them personally, and while many condemned this as suicide, Arthur did as he was asked, walking out to meet his enemies alongside Archbishop Dubric and several Knights.

Lot belittled the King, telling him he had no right to rule over men while he was but a boy. Arthur did not get angry or show any hostility. When the Scottish Knight was finished Arthur assured him he would break them all and they would submit to him. After that he returned inside Caerlon.

Merlin, wishing to end this pointless war, knew of an old legend dating back to the pre Christian age about Arthur's ancestor Gorbonian which stated he had, with the aid of Fairy Magic, placed a sword in a stone which would stand as a test when the succession for the British throne was in doubt.

This legend, once well known, had long been forgotten by most people, including Druids, but Blaise rediscovered it and told Merlin in one of his lessons.

He did not know if the legend was true or not but he believed it was worth pursuing and so went to Arthur, informing him of the story and detailing how it would aid him in proving his claim to the throne.

Arthur accepted the story's validity, trusting both Merlin and Blaise's judgement, and asked his cousin how they'd go about finding it.

Vivian, Merlin explained, could help. Under the cover of night, tasking Ulfin with leading the defense in his absence, Arthur and Merlin snuck out of Caerlon and headed to the Lake

where Blaise had taken Uther fifteen years before.

Along the way Merlin explained how the Fairies worked, that Vivian would ask for a favor in return for her services. Arthur understood this and wanted to continue, seeing this as the only way to peace.

Reaching the Lake Merlin cast the spell and summoned the Queen of Avalon. She came minutes later, just as beautiful and breathtaking as she had been when Uther met her.

Arthur spoke directly to her, asking the Queen for help in finding his ancestor's sword to prove he was the rightful King of Britain. Vivian, taken by Arthur's sincerity and desire for peace, agreed to help on the condition that, when he passed to the Otherworld, he would return the sword to her. The King accepted the terms.

Vivian told them to go to London, there, outside Saint Paul's Church they would find a stone. In the stone would be the sword Gorbonian sealed away and on it the words 'Whom ever pulls this sword from this stone shall be the rightful King of all Britain.'

She vanished then, and the two cousins made haste back to Caerlon to tell everyone, rebel and ally alike, to go to London.

Surprisingly, Lot and his men listened. They agreed to join the King in London. This decision was, most likely, brought about

due to the great losses their side was taking. Going to London would give them time to recuperate and plan their next attack.

The following morning Arthur's forces marched in tandem from Caerlon to London. When they reached it they found the stone exactly as Vivian had said, outside Saint Paul's Church with the words written along the blade.

Arthur dismounted in front of the rock and grasped the sword, its hilt finely made, blade perfect silver. A topaz gemstone adorning the pommel. He pulled it out effortlessly and held it high above his head.

Immediately most went on their knees, recognizing him as their Lord and King, but Lot did not. He stared at the boy, refusing to bow.

Along with Gabran he left and took many of his men with them. Caradoc Strongarm, however, would not go. He bowed before Arthur, apologizing for ever doubting his rights to the throne, and asked forgiveness. Arthur gave it and made preparations to meet Lot and the King of Scotland on the battlefield.

His sword, he later learned from Merlin, was crafted by Fairy Magic and would heal all wounds its wielder received in battle up to a certain point.

Its name, he said, was Excalibur.

Lot and Gabran, taking advantage of Arthur being in London, returned to Caerlon and took it. Days later the King led his army into Wales and outside the city the Battle of Caerlon resumed.

Unlike Arthur, Lot and the Scottish King refused to be besieged, meeting the King's men on the field before they could set up their siege engines.

Arthur, despite his young age, led from the front. He drew Excalibur from its hilt, the blade shining as bright as thirty torches as he led his soldiers into the incoming Scots.

Accounts of the battle praise the young King for his bravery. He led his men like a seasoned Commander and when, in the middle of battle, Lot managed to strike him down, Arthur rose quickly, brushing off his injury and continuing to fight.

Sir Baudwin and Sir Brastias, two veterans who served under Uther, commanded the flanks of the King's army and cut down their fair share of the Scottish forces. Together they and Arthur were able to beat Lot and Gabran back towards the city.

Inside Caerlon the common people, watching the battle unfold, decided to aid their King. Grabbing staffs, knives, and

whatever else they could find, they rushed out and set upon the Scots, massacring scores of them.

In the end Lot and Gabran couldn't hold the field but still the two men wouldn't admit defeat. They retreated with what soldiers they had left, fleeing back to Loegria where they planned to regroup.

Riding for London Arthur called an assembly of his nobles in order to figure out how best to crush the rebellion and restore order to Britain. Merlin advised his cousin that he should send messengers across to Gaul to Brittany. There two brothers could be found who would help.

The two brothers he mentioned were Ban and Bors of Benwick, a Kingdom of Britons bordering Brittany.

Not much is known of Ban and Bors' ancestry or background, its highly likely they either descended from the royal Breton line or a noble family who established their own Kingdom during Uther's time.

Whatever the case Arthur agreed with the plan and sent Ulfin and Brastias to Gaul to ask the brothers for aid. While they did that he prepared for a new campaign.

But Arthur wasn't the only one making alliances. Lot and Gabran too were forging links.

In the North they made alliances with a nobleman named

Clariance, recognizing him as King of Northumbria, the land where the Saxons settled, in exchange for his support.

They made an alliance with Muirchertach MacMuiredaig, the High King of Ireland (Lugaid died in 503). The details of this alliance are unknown but it is possible given the Irish immigration to Wales in the last few decades before the rebellion that they were prepared to offer MacMuiredaig the lands where the Irish settled if he would help them.

In North Wales a nobleman named Cradelmas rose in revolt and proclaimed himself King of the North Welsh, forming an alliance with the Scots.

In Cornwall Idres, a relative of Gorlois, declared himself King of Cornwall, throwing out Arthur's brother Cador who had been appointed King there by Uther and he too made an alliance with Lot and Gabran.

With Britain fractured in this way one wonders how Arthur kept his composure through it all. He did not fear for his life or try to abdicate, instead he focused on restoring the peace for his subjects.

A few weeks later Ban and Bors came to Britain with three hundred horsemen between them and a hundred footsoldiers. Arthur met them in London where a great feast was held to welcome them. As they talked and discussed

battle plans the rebels were setting up positions in Sherwood forest. Word had reached the King they were there and while he didn't react straight away, he kept an eye on the situation.

Finally, once the feast was finished and the morning came, Arthur and the two Benwick Kings rode towards Sherwood hoping for a final confrontation.

Clariance came up from the North, his army of Saxons and Britons bolstering the Scots. The North Welsh came down from their mountain homes, the Cornish advanced under Idres, and the Irish sailed across the sea. The stage was set for one of the biggest and bloodiest battles in British history.

On Merlin's advice Arthur and his allies struck at night, catching the rebel Kings off guard in their tents. Many of their tents collapsed on the rebels as they struggled to get up, costing them ten thousand men in the first attack alone and forced them to retreat deeper into Sherwood.

In the morning Ban and Bors, on Merlin's advice again, hid themselves in the forest with two hundred men, lying in wait for the rebels. Meanwhile Arthur, Ulfin, and Brastias led the main army into the fray.

They clashed with the rebels hard, who by now, feeling ashamed for their earlier defeat, fought savagely to avenge themselves. In the chaos of battle Ulfin and his horse were

killed.

The Irish High King and Idres attacked Griffet, a senior Knight and his cousin Lucan, both men veterans of Uther Pendragon's last Saxon war and faithful to Arthur. Lucan in particular was known, both then and in years to come, as one of the King's most loyal and dedicated men. The cousins managed to fend off their assault and deal their own blows, forcing the monarchs back.

In the center of all this madness was the young King. Arthur, the ancient chroniclers say, fought as fiercely as a lion (perhaps a bit hyperbolic but it gives a decent image nonetheless) and many older men marveled at his skill and ferocity in the battle.

As Arthur fought, Lot came upon him just like he did at the Battle of Caerlon, intent on ending his reign, and by extension, the battle then and there.

Except he failed. Arthur severely wounding the man instead and forced him to fall back from the battlefield.

Following his fight with Lot Arthur went on to kill twenty warriors single handily, pushing his men forward by sheer strength alone. Ban and Bors came out upon a signal from Merlin and attacked the rebels' flanks, and slowly they decimated their ranks.

Seeing the end was near the rebel leaders led one final charge into Arthur's ranks, losing hundreds of men in a vain attempt to kill the young King.

In the aftermath of the battle Lot and Gabran, along with all the other rebels, including the self proclaimed Kings, surrendered to Arthur just as he promised them they would outside Caerlon.

Instead of being wrathful and executing the rebels Arthur, against all expectations and advice, granted them clemacy. He forgave them all, including Lot and Gabran.

For Clariance, Cradelmas and Idres he stripped them of their Kingship but allowed them to keep their estates and noble titles provided they swore loyalty to him. All did so and Clariance and Idres would later join the Round Table as Knights.

Cradelmas, however, would continue to harbour hatred for Arthur and refused to be involved in any way with his court or government. He returned to North Wales where he died in obscurity twenty years later.

As for the High King of Ireland Arthur gave him a warning. He warned that, should he ever think of invading Britain again, Arthur would invade Ireland and conquer it. Muirchertach sailed home that same day.

When it came time for Lot and Gabran Arthur did not strip them of anything. Instead, in order to show Lot how much he had held him in regard during his father's reign Arthur made him Scotland's leading General and promised him he would honour his father's promise of Anna's hand in marriage. Gabran was offered a seat at the Round Table. He accepted.

Both men, impressed by Arthur's fairness and mercy, stayed loyal to him for the rest of their lives.

Britain's civil war was over, but the campaign that sealed Arthur's reputation as a great military leader had yet to begin.

Chapter 6: Badon Hill

Despite their many defeats at the hands of the British the Saxons, both those in Northern Britain and in Germania, harboured a strong desire to conquer the entire island and take the Kingship for one of their Chieftains or Kings. One among these Chieftains was Colgrim, a Saxon born in Britain during the days of Vortigern's reign and who had risen to his tribe's Chieftainship shortly before Arthur succeeded to the throne.

Its entirely possible, though unproven, that Colgrim aided Clariance when he marched from the North during the civil war as the King of Northumbria had many Saxons in his ranks. Whatever the case Colgrim had battle experience and was a capable General.

Along with his younger brother Baldulf the Saxon Chieftain made alliances with other tribes in the North as well as across the sea in his ancestral homeland, creating a partnership with Cheldric who had become the 'Emperor' of the continental Saxons, meaning he was Head King of a confederation of different Saxon tribes.

With this aid Colgrim began his campaign of conquest, taking all of Northern Loegria by storm, conquering cities and villages, and sweeping all the way into Scotland. Gabran did his best to combat the Saxon invasion but struggled greatly in doing so.

Arthur was in Silchester with his friends when he learned of the Saxon attacks. Like before he rallied thousands to his Dragon banner, including Ban and Bors, and with them marched towards Scotland.

When Colgrim learned of this he left the Scottish King and headed back south, meeting the young Pendragon at York. In the Saxon army were now Scots and Picts, indivdiual rebels more concerned for profit than anything else.

The two clashed along the River Duglas close to the city. Not much of the Battle of Duglas is known as the writers of the times failed to give details. What they did include however is that both sides suffered heavy losses but Arthur prevailed, forcing the Saxon leader to take refuge inside York where he quickly besieged him.

Baldulf, learning of this, advanced from Scotland with six thousand warriors ready to save his brother's ass. He had been on the Scottish coast awaiting the arrival of King Cheldric and his warriors but abandoned that to his subordinates when the news arrived.

He reached York by nightfall and planned on attacking Arthur by surprise but British scouts spotted him first and the King sent out his older brother Cador, now again King of Cornwall, with three hundred mounted warriors and three hundred foot soldiers to intercept him. This they did and defeated them, putting the Saxons to flight.

Greatly angered by failing to save his brother Baldulf began considering another plan but he need not have as King Cheldric and his men landed the next morning, again throwing Scotland into chaos.

Arthur abandoned the siege of York on the advice of his generals, they feared that if Cheldric's men came to the aid of Colgrim they would be overwhelmed, so the King retreated to

Camelot. Here it was agreed that Arthur send messengers to Armorica asking its King, his cousin Hoel, for aid. While the messengers went to Gaul Arthur made efforts to hold the Saxon advance out of Scotland. Gabran also did his part, though Scotland, for the moment, remained in, in the main, under Saxon dominance.

A week later Hoel arrived with fifteen thousand men at Hamo's Port and met his cousin at Camelot. The two men embraced each other affectionately and together with Ban, Bors, and Cador, began preparing their campaign against the invaders.

Four days later Arthur led his army out again to relieve the city of Kaerliudocit in what is now Lincolnshire. They killed six hundred Saxons and drove the rest from the siege. The Saxon leaders fled back into Scotland, Arthur hot on their heels.

In the Caledonian forest the two sides clashed again, the Saxons using the thick trees to shield themselves against Arthur's archers.

Thinking on his feet the King ordered his men to cut down trees and use them to block the Saxons in, trapping them within a ring. This his men did and once the Germans were pinned down and caught, Arthur and his men repeatedly attacked them.

For three days the British kept their enemies pinned down like this, killing scores of them and reducing the rest to hunger.

Running low on provisions Cheldric, Colgrim and Baldulf decided to surrender, knowing they couldn't break British lines. The three leaders presented themselves to Arthur and begged him for mercy, they swore to pay him tribute and to leave Britain for Germania.

The King, after consulting with his allies, agreed to their terms if they would leave hostages with him to ensure they kept their promise. The Saxons handed over their hostages and returned to their ships.

But the Germanic leaders had no plans to actually uphold their end of the deal, they simply needed a way out. While sailing for Germania Cheldric ordered his ships to turn for the British coast, landing in Totnes and slaughtered all in their path. Man, woman, child, and animal. Cheldric, humiliated by his defeat by a 'boy' wanted to gain revenge in the cruelest way possible and so wiped out as many villages as he could before Arthur came for him.

And come for him the King did. He gave orders to execute the hostages (a common practice when hostages were given in peace agreements that were later broken) and rode back into Loegria to put an end to the Saxons once and for all.

He found them outside the city of Aquae Sulis, a Roman Briton settlement dating back to 40s AD in Somerset. The Saxons ravaged it and sat in their camps enjoying the spoils of their victory. Arthur set up his army on top of the hill overlooking the city, known as Badon to the native British.

The next morning Arthur and his warriors rose early for Mass conducted by Dubric and David, the Archbishop filled with 'the spirit' truly believing this war was a Holy one. Once communion was taken Dubric stood before the army and gave this short speech:

"You that have the honour of professing the Christian faith, keep fixed in your minds the love you owe your country and fellow subjects whose sufferings by the Pagans will be an everlasting reproach to you if you do not courageously defend them. It is your country which you fight for and which you, when required, voluntarily suffer death. For he who sacrifices himself for his brothers and sisters offers himself a living sacrifice to God. Whoever dies, therefore, in this battle will be absolved of all sins for his sacrifice."

With these words said the British began to arm themselves, renewed with the confidence that God was on their side.

Arthur dressed in his suit of mail, placed his helmet, a Dragon emblem at its center, on his head, and grabbed his shield which he had named Priwen. On this shield was painted the

image of Mary the Mother of Jesus who he felt a special devotion towards.

Done preparing he placed his men in order and launched himself down the hill, leading the charge into the Saxon lines, drawing Excalibur as he went.

It was a fierce struggle from the beginning. Briton and Saxon fought like animals, tearing and ripping into each other, blood drenching many of the combatants and the ground. The battle continued like this for the better part of the day.

By late afternoon Arthur, growing frustrated at how little his side had gained, called upon Mary's name and rushed into the thickest of the enemy ranks. He killed four men and as he continued to fight it gave his men a much needed morale boost and they charged after him. killing four hundred and seventy. Among these dead were Colgrim and Baldulf.

Cheldric retreated a few minutes later, taking the bulk of the Saxon forces with him. Arthur ordered Cador to go after the German King, the Cornish leader overcoming the Saxons, killing Cheldric and his men on the Isle of Thanet in Kent a few days later.

This defeat of the High King of the Saxons ended any invasion attempts by any Germanic King or Chieftain for decades, though a few raiding parties would occasionally land on the

coast, some of which Arthur repelled personally.

However, before his death, Cheldric had sent a message to Muirchertach MacMuiredaig in order to ask for aid and, the Irish High King decided to come to Britain again to avenge himself on Arthur. He never learned of the Saxon High King's death until he had already sailed up the River Tay in Scotland.

Arthur fell upon the Irish without mercy, decimating their ranks, forcing the survivors to retreat back to Ireland, but he wouldn't forget this attack and he would in time follow through on his warning of invading Ireland.

For the time being however he returned to Aquae Sulis to see how much damage the Saxons had done.

In Aquae Sulis he met with the elder council, a group of older men in white togas who were descended from Roman settlers and still valued Roman culture and tradition, their council acting like the Senate in Rome.

While in the city Arthur met his future wife, Guinevere. A beautiful young woman, Guinevere wasn't from Britain, she was born and raised in the Italian city of Bolonia where her father, Leodegarius, served as the city's Consul, and had come to the British Isles for reasons unrecorded.

She wasn't just a nobleman's daughter either, Guinevere was the granddaughter on her mother's side of the Roman

Emperor Anthemius, great great granddaughter of Emperor Theodosius I and a descendant of the Roman Emperor Procopius. On her paternal side Guinevere descended from the Emperors Didius Julianus, Titus Fulvius Quietus, Valerian, and Domitius Alexander.

Of mixed Italian and Greek ancestry Guinevere was the poster child of the multiethnic nation the Kingdom of Britain had become under Rome and the Pendragon Dynasty, and by all accounts Arthur was smitten almost immediately.

Guinevere for her part also took an interest in the King. Its not known how old she was but its believed she was between eighteen and twenty at the time she met Arthur. Within weeks the two were married and Guinevere crowned Queen of Britain.

By 516, Guinevere gave birth to their first child, a son they named Amhar. In the following twenty seven years Arthur and his Queen had a further fourteen children who are as follows:

Duran, born 517.

Melora, born 518.

Arthur, known throughout his life as Little Arthur, born in 520.

Loholt, born 525.

Thomas, born 527.

Mervin, born 528.

Kyden, born 529.

Gwydre, born 530.

Hilde, born 536.

Morgan, born 538.

Patrick, born 539.

Aristes, born 541.

Owain, born 543.

Archfedd, born 545.

Chapter 7: Building An Empire

Shortly after his marriage to Guinevere Arthur returned to Camelot where he spent Christmas with his new wife and his friends, gifting them many presents in thanks for their loyalty and aid in defeating the Saxon invasion. Gabran had died in the Battle of Badon Hill and so now Arthur handed the Kingship of Scotland to his son Domangart, still a young man of seventeen. He gave Urian, Domangart's younger brother,

the Kingship of Moray in the Scottish Highlands.

He gave Lot, who performed wonderfully during the latest campaign, Anna's hand in marriage. By Anna he would have three sons, Walgan, Mordred, and Agravain, all three becoming Knights of the Round Table as they grew up.

After the feast, a warrior was brought before the King who called himself Gawain of Rome. He asked permission to join Arthur's army, believing he was a worthy Lord.

Gawain, as it turned out, had been British born but raised in Rome by foster parents who had found him floating in a basket in the Thames River twenty five years prior. As a young man he joined the Roman legions, becoming a cavalry Captain and serving in the Middle East before retiring and returning to the land of his birth to learn more about it and its people.

Arthur, always willing to take capable men, especially those with prior military experience, into his service, accepted, making Gawain a Knight on the spot. In time Gawain would become a member of the Round Table and become one of Arthur's most trusted Generals.

The following summer the King outfitted a fleet of ships, intending to make good his threat against Ireland. Once finished the King sailed for Ireland and landed along the coast, marching inland and meeting Muirchertach MacMuiredaig in

battle.

Arthur's men completely crushed the Irish force, scattering them and forcing MacMuiredaig to flee back to Tara as the British continued into the country. Eventually Arthur came to terms with the Irish High King whereby Ireland would come under Arthur's overlordship and MacMuiredaig, while retaining the title of High King, would govern in his name, making Ireland effectively a British province.

While in Ireland one of Arthur's men found out about an island in the Atlantic ocean called Iceland where Irish monks had set up a community. Arthur, desiring this new island for his people, set out for it, conquering it without any bloodshed, later incorporating Greenland as well without battle. Within months both islands would be colonized by British settlers, Scots and Irish.

The ease with which he defeated Cheldric, the High King of Ireland, and absorbed Iceland and Greenland into his domain spread across Europe and the King of Sweden, Jorund, sailed to Iceland voluntarily and offered himself as a vassal to Arthur, fearing invasion. Arthur warmly received him and accepted his offer, making Sweden a part of his growing Empire.

After receiving Jorund's submission, and after winter had past, Arthur returned home where he stayed twelve years living

with Guinevere and raising their children.

During this time one of Arthur's sisters, Morgana, learned she possessed Magic and the gift of prophecy. At first, like anyone would be, she was scared, but Merlin took her under his wing and she grew confident in her powers. To confident.

She began viewing herself as the better candidate for the throne than her elder brother as he possessed no innate Magic, believing Britain would benefit in being restored to the Old Ways and Christianity banished.

Becoming a Druidess Morgana took a Knight in Arthur's service, Accolon of Gaul, as her lover. Using Magic and her own natural charm she began turning Accolon against her brother. It happened in slow steps, Accolon probably was never aware of it she crafted the deception so well. She convinced him he would become King of Britain should she become Queen and that Arthur was a lesser man than him.

Setting up the assassination plot Morgana instructed her lover to invite Arthur on a hunting trip outside Camelot. She would be lying in wait and when the time was right would cast a spell, ripping Excalibur from his side and handing it to Accolon who would then kill him with it.

A few days later the plan was set into motion.

Arthur and Accolon rode out from the capital city into the

surrounding countryside, pleasantly talking about court affairs and home life. Morgana, as she had arranged, lie in wait, and as they past she cast a spell yanking Excalibur from her brother's side.

Accolon caught the Fairy forged sword in midair and swung at Arthur, the King barely dodging in time. Jumping from his horse Arthur searched for something he could use as a weapon but couldn't find anything. Accolon came at him again swinging Excalibur down and the King blocked it with his shield, the Magic sword smashing into pieces.

Without any other option Arthur continued to battle Accolon with his shield, bashing it against the Knight's body and avoiding Excalibur's blade. The fight continued like this for several minutes, with it only being a matter of time before the Gaul landed the right strike and killed the King.

What saved Arthur wasn't his own prowess, he couldn't do much against Magic, but the intervention of Vivian. The Queen of Avalon appeared before Accolon, enraged someone not sanctioned by her was wielding the sword her people created. She used her own Magic to pull Excalibur from his hand and gave it to the King.

Arthur quickly struck down Accolon, stabbing him through the gut. The Gaul did not die straight away, however, but lingered for five days more. In that time he told the King everything.

Morgana was charged with treason but she escaped Camelot before the guards could arrest her. She headed to the North where she found shelter with a Saxon Chieftain.

Arthur would not have time to hunt for his sister either for, within weeks of her escape, news from Lot reached Camelot.

His uncle, Sichelin, the King of Norway, had died without issue and left the Kingdom to him as he was the last male relative in the direct line descending from Odin, the founder and first King of Norway many centuries before (Odin, in this case, was a half human, half Elven warrior named after the God, rather than the God himself).

However the Norse, having no desire of being ruled by a foreigner of mixed blood, instead chose a nobleman named Riculf as their new King.

Lot, hoping Arthur could help, came to Camelot to ask for aid. The King agreed on the condition that Lot would recognize Arthur as his overlord and rule Norway in his name. Lot accepted and together the two men outfitted a fleet.

Landing on Norway's coast a week later the British were immediately attacked by Riculf and his warriors. Arthur and Lot struggled to take the beach head as hundreds of their men died around them, but eventually they drove the Norse warriors back after the King led a charge that saw Riculf and

countless others killed, and the British pushed inland.

The surviving Norse noblemen still refused to accept Lot as their King and so Arthur spent a month destroying their fortresses until finally, after much destruction, Norway fell and Lot was crowned King.

Leaving his brother in law with a host of British warriors to help keep the peace, Arthur returned home where a letter from Ban and Bors awaited him. This letter asked the British King for aid in their own war against another Gaullish King named Claudas.

Claudas, a Roman Gaul, had become King of Berry due to the support of the Roman Emperor, Leo, who saw in Claudas a suitable ally in keeping the province of Gaul in Roman hands as Germanic tribes, such as the Franks, Suevi, and Batavi, were moving into the province and threatening to overrun it. Armorica and Benwick as well were trying to wiggle out of Rome's hands and assert their independence.

It was this 'wiggle' that caused Claudas to attack Benwick, forcing Ban and Bors to wage war against the Roman client King and his Roman troops. Unfortunately, by the time Arthur received and read the letter Bors had already been killed in battle by Claudas who captured his two sons, Bors the Younger and Lionel, while Ban was barely hanging on to Benwick with the help of his sons Lancelot and Hector.

Lancelot, a legendary name connected with Arthur today, was a little known Knight at the time. The eldest son of Ban and his wife, Queen Elaine, a descendant of King David and a distant relative to the Pendragons, Lancelot grew up a skilled warrior who early on earned a reputation for fairness, honour, and loyalty. Together with his father and brother, Lancelot held onto Benwick until the British arrived.

And when they did, it soon became apparent that the war wouldn't just be with Claudas, but also with Rome itself.

Lucius Frollo, a Romanized Frank, Governor of Gaul and Duke of Gallia Aquitania, learned of Arthur's landing while in Paris. He had been aware of Ban's letter but did not believe the British King would be foolish enough to ever attempt an invasion of the Roman Empire. When he heard he was, in fact, that foolish, Frollo mobilized the legions under his command and marched to meet Arthur and his men.

The thing was that Arthur's army wasn't just made up of British soldiers, but also Norse and Swedes, it was a massive invasion force, one that would give the Romans a run for their money.

Ban and his sons linked up with Arthur soon after his arrival in Armorica as did his cousin Hoel, clashing with the Romans

soon afterwards and driving Frollo back. To make matters worse for the Roman Governor, this defeat was so severe that many of the surviving Roman soldiers decided to throw down their arms and join the British!

Frollo retreated to Paris to gather more men and in that time Arthur and Ban defeated Claudas but failed to kill him as he fled back to Berry.

While the British and Armorican Britons fought Claudas Frollo focused on bringing in legions from other provinces of the Empire such as Germania, Spain, and Dacia (what is now Romania) and fortified Paris against them, reasoning that if he couldn't beat them in open warfare he could beat them through a siege.

This theory was soon put to the test when Arthur and Ban led their men towards Paris and surrounded the city. A month of hard fighting ensued and nothing Frollo predicted came to pass. Instead of defeating the combined British-Armorican forces Frollo watched as his soldiers and the civillians under his care began starving and dying from thirst.

Crushed by this but unwilling to admit his defeat the Roman Governor sent a messenger out of the city walls to the Kings. The messenger went to Arthur's tent telling him Frollo challenged him to a duel.

The winner, they said, would keep Gaul. The loser would die honourably.

Arthur accepted.

The two men met on the island which now called Île de la Cité in the Seine river outside Paris. The island was where Frollo's estate was located and where, one presumes, he felt most comfortable.

Both armed themselves well, Arthur drawing Excalibur while the Roman Governor equipped the best shield and sword the legions could offer. Its not known if Frollo knew about Excalibur's Magic beforehand but if he did he shrugged it off, confident he could still kill the British King.

This confidence was quickly shattered as Arthur almost immediately brought the duel to an end by knocking Frollo down with a fast blow to the chest and was about to finish him when the Governor struck out, hitting Arthur in the chest and dropping him to the ground where he lay still.

British warriors in the crowd, seeing their Lord laid low, feared the worst and began causing an uproar, but they needn't have worried, Arthur soon rose, blood trickling down his armour.

Using Priwen to protect himself from Frollo's attacks the King renewed his own assault, letting his anger feed his strikes and counter strikes, but this anger blinded him and opened the

King up to another blow by the Governor, this time right on the forehead. Arthur crashed to the ground again, head bleeding profusely, covering his armour, shield, and the ground beneath his feet red with blood.

Seeing more of his own bodily fluids threw Arthur into a furious madness. He ignored the pain, shot up onto his feet, and drove Excalibur down into Frollo's head, cleaving open his helmet, blade cutting deep into his skull and slicing straight through down to his jaw.

He was dead before he hit the ground.

Once word spread the Governor was dead the citizens of Paris wasted little time in opening the gates for Arthur and his men, not willing to risk his wrath after hearing how he dealt with Frollo.

With Paris his Arthur was in control of all Gaul, though one Roman Commander, a Romanized German named Guitard, held out in Galla Aquitania but was swiftly brought to heel by Hoel and the Armorican Britons on Arthur's request.

The territory of Gaul was made up of what is now France, Belgium, parts of Northern Italy, Switzerland, Luxumborg, and Holland, and the Rhineland of Germania. Killing Frollo and defeating the Romans in Gaul gave Arthur access to all of these lands and their resources, expanding his realm

considerably literally overnight. To help him govern this new addition Arthur appointed Ban to be High King of Gaul and he gave Neustria, now Normandy, to Lucan, and Andegavia, what later became the county of Anjou, to his brother Kay.

The conquest of Gaul sent shockwaves throughout Europe and made everyone, including the Roman Emperor, take notice of Arthur more than ever.

One monarch, Rolf Kraki, the King of Denmark and a great warrior in his own right, went to Britain personally and, much like his Swedish counterpart Jorund, submitted willingly to Arthur's rule in order to spare his people a possible invasion.

Arthur, as was his custom, accepted Rolf's offer and allowed him to keep his Kingship so long as he governed in the Pendragon name. With the addition of Denmark, all of Scandinavia was now a part of the British Empire.

The King returned to Britain once Claudas was put in his place, Lancelot and Hector returning with him to learn more about Statecraft and politics, both becoming members of the Round Table. To show the siblings how much he held their family in high regard Arthur gave them Bamburgh Castle in Northumbria to reside in, which still stands to this day. The two brothers settled well into court life and became Arthur's close friends.

During the winter news arrived from Ireland that a monk, Brendan, had just arrived back from a mysterious island called by him the Isle of the Blessed across the Atlantic ocean. A beautiful land, filled with thick forests, abundant flora, and fishing spots, the Isle had been found by an earlier Irishman, Maeldun of Eoganacht, and Brendan had gone there hoping to find a peaceful place to establish a monastic community. He and fifteen of his fellows stayed there for fifteen days scouting the place out before returning to Ireland where the news eventually found its way to Camelot.

Its possible Arthur had known about the Isle of the Blessed before as it was a common tale among the British and Irish of his time, though whether he believed it or not we can't say. But now, given that Brendan was credible, he did.

And he became interested in taking it for his own, wanting to expand his lands more so his people could have more farmland and territory and, if one had to guess, because he wanted to keep his image as a great conqueror alive.

Unlike much of Arthur's conquests his expedition to the Isle of the Blessed and its subsequent conquest is not well detailed, but it is understood that the island in question was what is now the province of Newfoundland in Canada. After the Isle of the Blessed Arthur continued on and conquered Estotiland which roughly corresponds with Labrador, Nova Scotia, New

Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec today. The King fought battles with local Native tribes but the details are not known save for the fact he defeated them and incorporated them into his Empire.

Arthur returned to Britain in 531 where he celebrated his new conquests at Camelot with a great feast where he called together the nobles from all of his territories.

At this feast Merlin was married to Gwendolena, daughter of the great Bard and Archdruid Taliesin, and together they had a daughter, Inogen, born a year later.

Also at this feast Arthur was crowned again to enhance his status as an Emperor of his own Empire. David Pendragon, Arthur's middle aged uncle, was also invested with the Archbishopric of Caerlon as Dubric, now advanced in years, wanted to retire from Church affairs and spend his remaining years as a hermit in Wales.

The King made official decrees that all citizens in his Empire be treated with respect, that low born as well as high born be given fairness before the law. He made sure every country was given ample defenses, money, and whatever else they needed to be able to flourish as members of his realm.

Near the end of the feast a guard brought in twelve men, all elderly and dignified, holding olive branches, a sign they were

ambassadors. They announced they had come under the command of Emperor Leo of Rome, who demanded Arthur recognize him as his overlord as his ancestors had done before him for centuries.

To this Arthur, his pride at its peak and confidence the same, laughed. He had taken Gaul from the Emperor and had conquered several countries and tribes already, who was he to demand the King of such vast a realm should pay tribute.

Turning the tables Arthur mentioned his own ancestry from Romulus, the House of Caesar, Constantine the Great, and Magnus Maximus, the latter ones being of British descent themselves and Roman Emperors, and that by virtue of such descent Leo owed him tribute and acknowledgement as overlord.

Suffice to say the twelve elderly Romans left much flustered and at a loss for words, telling Arthur he made a grave mistake.

To this Cador scoffed and assured his younger brother they could beat the Romans. Domangart agreed as did the rest of his court and all the Lords and Kings offered men for a new campaign.

The conquest of Rome herself.

Chapter 8: The Roman War

To march on Rome Arthur assembled an army of thousands, pulled from every province within his vast Empire. There was Irishmen, Danes, Norse, Scotsmen, Saxon, Native tribesmen from North America, Gauls, and many others.

It was a multiethnic army all brought together under the Red Dragon Banner of the Pendragon Dynasty. By the early days of August, 531 AD, the King was in Gaul leading his army towards Italy.

In the vanguard were his Generals, including Lancelot, Hector, Gawain, Lot, Domangart, and many others. Arthur rode at the head, wanting all to know he was a King who fought alongside his men. Back in Britain he left the government in the hands of Guinevere.

The Emperor, having a feeling the British King would reject the tribute, had taken the liberty of ordering the Governors of all the provinces to come to Italy and help him defend the Empire, planning to crush Arthur on the continent and then conquer Britain afterwards.

Those who answered his call were as follows.

Epistrophius, Governor of Greece.

Hilderic, King of the Germanic Vandal tribe and Governor of Roman Africa.

Justinian, Governor of the Middle Eastern provinces of Syria and Arabia.

Theudis, King of the Germanic Visigoths and Governor of Spain.

Kavad, King of Iran, who was a vassal of Leo.

Sertorius, Governor of Libya.

Hephaestus, Governor of Egypt.

Escabor, King of Babylon, a vassal of Leo.

Polytetes, Governor of Bithynia.

Along with these men came the nobility of their respective provinces and Kingdoms.

Senators were also called up to serve, men like Lucius Tiberius, Marius Lepidus, and Gaius Metellus Cotta. Leo was taking no chances, he knew Arthur was dangerous, knew he was a fine General, and as much as he believed in Roman superiority he would not risk losing his Empire over misplaced confidence or pride.

Arthur marched on Augustodunum expecting the Emperor's

forces to be there, but was disappointed when he arrived and found it empty of enemies.

However he learned the Emperor and his men were several miles away. Arthur selected Gawain to ride over and give Leo a message from him.

The message was simple. Arthur challenged the Emperor to a duel. If he won, Rome and all its provinces and vassals were his. If Leo won, Britain and all the territories belonging to it would be his.

Gawain hastily went to deliver the message and was welcomed into the Roman camp by the Emperor. Gawain relayed Arthur's message to Leo, but before he could speak, his nephew, Gaius Quintilianus, interrupted.

"The Britons are better at boasting and threatening than they are at fighting!"

Gawain, enraged by the insult to him, his King, and his men, drew his sword and sliced the man's head clean off his shoulders.

Quickly Gawain leapt back on his horse and rode off, several Romans in pursuit. Using his sword he killed them and made it back to the British lines in time, informing Arthur of what happened.

The King prepared for battle.

Before the battle started Arthur gave strict orders to his men that under no circumstances should the innocent people of the countryside suffer while this war raged. He feared that as the two sides fought it would spill into nearby towns and villages and wanted, as much as he could, to avoid any murdering of innocence.

His Knights and soldiers readily agreed and made a vow not to harm the common Gauls, then the Romans came into view, Arthur drawing Excalibur.

Lancelot, on Arthur's orders, led a charge of soldiers to cut off some of the enemy while Cador and others worked their way around them. The Benwick Prince killed many Romans himself and pushed the rest back with his men, Arthur's other men able to do the same. Soon the battle, later known as the Battle of Champayne, went in the King's favor.

Pressing the advantage Arthur followed the Emperor's forces into the Vale of Sessoine where he surrounded it, sending several units to garrison nearby towns so the Romans couldn't use them.

Leo, knowing the only way out was to burst through the British lines, gave a speech to his men:

"Venerable fathers to whose Empire both East and West owe obedience, remember the virtues of your ancestors who were

not afraid to shed their blood when the vanquishing of the enemy required it. They left it to their posterity as a legacy so that their descendants may do the same. Let their noble deeds animate you, let it rouse up your spirits and be not afraid to march against our enemies boldy with your swords and spears. The victory shall be ours!"

Once the Emperor finished he marshalled his men and marched to meet Arthur for one final confrontation, the two sides soon facing each other.

Suddenly trumpets blared, Theudis rushing out with his Visigoths and other Spanish warriors. Domangart and Cador quickly cut off the charge with their own men but were overwhelmed and needed to fall back.

Rolf Kraki, leading a contingent of Norsemen, went head first into the Iranian ranks led by Kavad, the two sides locking into a fierce struggle. The screams of the dying echoed throughout the battlefield, green fields stained red with blood.

In the ensuing chaos Arthur's younger brother Kay was surrounded by Iranian troops and dealt mortal wounds.

Kay, not one to give up, ignored the pain he was in and killed a couple of the Iranians and cleared a path for himself, only to run into the Governor of Libya's forces. Again he killed several before ultimately being cut down by an unknown hand.

Theudis fell soon after Kay, as well as Marcus Lepidus and hundreds of their men.

Arthur suffered another loss when Leodegarius, Guinevere's father, was killed. How or when he fell in the battle is unknown, but his body was discovered later as they counted the dead.

Gawain and Hoel, frustrated that the British and their allies couldn't break the Roman lines, decided to team up and combine their forces into one mega force and rushed towards the Emperor himself. Together the two men and their warriors killed all in their quake, managing to reach Leo.

Gawain slaughtered the bodyguards who came at him and attacked the Emperor, but Leo was a seasoned warrior having served in the Roman legions in his youth and despite his age, he was seventy three, he drew his sword and met the younger man in combat.

They went back and forth for a good while, Leo a better swordsman than Gawain could've ever possibly imagined, suffering a series of blows to his body that, while not fatal, left him bleeding.

As the two men fought the Romans pushed back the British under Hoel and Gawain, knowing if he stayed behind he'd be overrun, reluctantly disengaged from the Emperor and fell

back with Hoel and their men.

Arthur, a ways back, saw this and called for his men to listen to him and led another charge towards Leo. Excalibur flashed in the midday sun, cutting down scores of Romans as the King carved his way to his enemy. Arthur killed Sertorius and Polytetes of Bithynia in hand to hand combat as the two men attempted to protect Leo.

This charge Arthur led put thousands of Romans to death, including the Emperor, who was killed by a British spear. The battle was over, Arthur had won.

In the aftermath of the great battle Arthur gave orders for the British and Roman dead to be put in separate groups so that they could be identified. He had Kay's body returned to Britain and buried beside their father.

As for Leo, Arthur gave him due honours befitting an Emperor, holding no malice towards the man. He draped him with the Imperial purple and ordered him to be placed upon shields.

While preparing to enter Italy the surviving leaders of the Emperor's army came to Arthur and voluntarily surrendered themselves and what remained of their men to him and in an instant Arthur added Iran, Egypt, Spain, Syria, Arabia, Babylon, Anatolia, Greece, Libya, Bithynia, and Roman Africa to his realm.

By Christmas Day, 531, Arthur Pendragon entered Rome with his army where he was met by the Senate and the Pope, Boniface II. He returned Leo's body to them and in return Boniface took Arthur to the Imperial Palace on the Aventine Hill where, with hundreds in attendance, he was formally crowned Emperor of the Roman Empire.

Arthur stayed in Rome over the winter, holding Court in the palace where meetings of the Round Table took place and where he gave out gifts of lands and titles to his most devoted followers.

By spring of 532 he was ready to return home. For the next fifty three years he spent governing his vast realm in peace, not venturing out on anymore campaigns personally. He built the Empire up into a thriving State, making sure each province received adequate financial support and spent considerable time establishing many British colonies in North America, the Nordic countries, and the Middle East and Africa.

In that time he witnessed his children grow up and marry and give him grandchildren. He gave his youngest son, Owain, the task of governing his North American possessions and under Owain Pendragon these territories grew to include all of what is now New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Minnesota, and North Dakota. Sadly Owain would be killed in battle against Native tribes in 570 AD in what is now South Dakota,

defending his father's borders. Who governed these territories after his death is unknown but they would remain a part of the Arthurian Empire for a hundred years, Owain succeeding in establishing solid British rule.

In Arthur's old age he made peace with Morgana, who, after spending years in the North trying to form a new plan to assassinate him, finally gave up and sailed for the Isle of the Blessed where she spent her remaining years, dying in 580 and was buried there.

In 585, Mordred, Arthur's nephew, a long time member of the Round Table and who always dreamt of ruling in his own right, staged a rebellion with the help of Arthur's eldest son Amhar. Why Arthur's heir joined his cousin has never been precisely known, though it could simply comes down to him being tired of waiting to inherit the throne. After all Arthur, now 85, was still in good health and could go on to reign many more years.

Whatever the case may have been, Mordred and Amhar, along with several minor Lords, rose up against Arthur and hired Saxon mercenaries from Germania to bolster their numbers and marched on Camelot with eight thousand men.

Chapter 9: Camlann

The elderly King, receiving advanced word of what his son and nephew planned, gathered together an army of his own comprising of British, Irishmen, Norse, Swedes, and Danes, meeting them along the road to the capital where a fierce battle was fought. Mordred's men killed many of his uncle's soldiers, cutting down several important members of his court including Angus, a Prince of Scotland, and Gawain. Arthur's warriors, after much difficulty, were able to push Mordred and Amhar's men back, forcing them to retreat.

The royal cousins fled to Cornwall where they quickly overran Cador's men, killing Arthur's older brother in the process and taking over the small Kingdom to use as a base.

Arthur learned of Cador's death as he entered Cornwall, grieving the loss while pushing forward, reaching Mordred and Amhar's forces by the river Camel at the site now known as Slaughterbridge.

Then, however, the area was known as Camlann, a name now forever linked with King Arthur.

Leading the King's armies were his sons Duran, Little Arthur, Thomas, Mervin, Loholt, Kyden, and their uncles Madoc and Gormant. Arthur himself did not shy away from battle despite

his age, Excalibur's Magic helping to give him energy.

On the other side stood Mordred and Amhar, both men resolving to either take the field or die.

The battle of Camlann began with fury as Arthur and his sons and brothers led the charge into the line of rebels, trampling many and cutting down scores of others. The Red Dragon banner of the Pendragon Dynasty flying in the wind as the Camel river soon turned a scarlet colour as bodies dropped into it.

For much of the day the two sides tore at each other, Arthur doing his best to reach Mordred and kill him. During the course of the fighting he met Amhar and the two locked swords.

What, if anything, was said between father and son we do not know, but Arthur emerged the victor, cutting down Amhar where he stood and continued on to Mordred. By this time Duran, Loholt, and Little Arthur were also dead, killed by unknown hands. Whether Arthur knew of the deaths of his sons is impossible to say, but even if he did, he kept going, carving his way to Mordred, calling upon the Fairy Magic to keep him strong.

Finally the two men met face to face, Arthur covered in the blood and gore of his enemies, heaving with anger and

sadness. Mordred, confident he would kill his uncle, egged him on. The King went at him and they locked blades.

Back and forth they fought, Morded dodging Excalibur's blade and dealing damage to Arthur's body, drawing blood.

Shaking off the pain Arthur struck out again and this time Mordred couldn't dodge it, getting slashed across the chest.

Mordred fell, but he did not die, merely pretended. Arthur, wanting to make sure the traitor was dead, walked over to deliver a final blow but, as he stood over him, Mordred grabbed a nearby spear and ran his uncle through.

The spear ripped Arthur's intestines out his back, a fatal wound Excalibur's Magic couldn't heal. Mordred died soon after, but Arthur lingered.

Lucan, Lancelot and others found him an hour later, barely hanging on to life. The battle had gone in their favor, but at a terrible cost. Many Round Table Knights were dead and hundreds of soldiers wounded.

Arthur held up Excalibur to Lucan, instructing him to return it to Vivian, he needed to keep his promise. Lucan duly did as he was ordered and rode off at once.

Arthur was surrounded by his surviving sons and brothers at the end, informed of his victory. They carefully moved him to try and heal his wounds but it was no use. He died as he was

being carried to safety.

The King's body was taken back to Camelot where the Queen, his other children, and his siblings could say their goodbyes. Once he was prepared for burial Arthur was taken to the Abby of Glastonbury by his daughters Hilde, Melora, and Archfedd which had been founded by his ancestor, Joseph of Arimathea, centuries earlier. Here the King was laid to rest, in time joined by Guinevere who died several years later.

The Empire Arthur founded would continue for a hundred years after his passing until the final Pendragon King, Cadwaladr, died in 683.